A Stitch in Time by blue_pencil_case

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Snapshots of Steve and Jonathan’s adult life together, from their first date to the adoption of their first child.

A Stitch in Time

1994

“Damn it,” Jonathan cursed quietly, biting his lip as he fumbled.

“What?” Steve said from beside him, without bothering to look up.

“I skipped a stitch again.”

The two were leaning against each other on their plush couch, a single ball of baby pink yarn between them and a crochet hook in each of their hands. Their stereo softly played The Smiths and buttery sunlight shined through their large living room window.

Hands working at a breakneck speed, Steve was effortlessly weaving yarn into a miniature blanket. Jonathan, however, struggled to stitch together a haphazard scarf. They had both been at it for quite a while.

A low, exasperated sigh prompted Steve to pause his work and tilt his head to look over at Jonathan, who was glaring at his own hands with what Steve thought was an adorable pout.

“Jonathan, babe,” Steve murmured with a solemn shake of his head, “What are you doing?”

“Single crochet,” Jonathan answered briskly, the frustration evident in his voice as he knotted up yet another stitch.

“Single crochet my ass. Here, watch my hands.” Steve scooted a fraction of an inch closer and held up his half-done blanket. He slowed down the motion of his hands and patiently explained, “It’s poke, wrap, pull through, wrap, pull through both loops. Easy peasy.”

Jonathan tried again and did his best to imitate, biting his lip in concentration. Meanwhile, Steve resumed his own piece, which was beginning to take shape quite nicely.

Some time later, Jonathan gave a petulant groan before slumping against Steve’s shoulder. Despite his best efforts, there was nothing

more than a tangled mess of yarn at the end of his hook. “How are you so good at this?” he grumbled.

“It just takes practice. You’ll get it,” Steve replied smoothly, smooching the top of Jonathan’s head without the slightest hitch in his movements.

“This is unnecessary,” Jonathan pointed out, “My mom already has plenty of clothes from when Will was a baby just sitting in the attic.”

Steve gasped, holding his hand to his heart in a dramatic display of offense. “But those haven’t been lovingly handcrafted by *me* .” He continued working, picking up where he left off without difficulty. “Anyway, I’m convinced that you just want our kid to freeze to death, Byers.”

“And I’m convinced that you just want to show off how good you are at crochet, *Byers* ,” Jonathan retorted cheekily, and Steve set down his hook firmly on his own lap.

Steve turned to give his husband a proper kiss on the mouth and purposely pulled away with a loud, exaggerated *smack.* He grinned. “I love it when you call me that.”

“I love you,” replied Jonathan, easy as breathing, before he pressed his face against Steve’s shoulder.

“I love you, too,”murmured Steve into Jonathan’s soft hair. He sighed happily, and allowed himself a moment of blissful contentment. Then he sat up, resolute. “Now keep at it, Jonny-boy. I want two booties done by *noon.* ”

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1988

Steve slammed the door to his five-year-old BMW, walked around to pop the trunk, and grabbed a cardboard box of his belongings. His shoes crunched against the gravel, and there was a light breeze rustling his hair.

He stood in front of the house he had grown up in for the first time in
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four years, and it was as empty as always. At the time, his parents were in New York and couldn't make it to his homecoming, a fact that Steve was not surprised by.

Steve kicked up the doormat and retrieved the hidden house key under it. After he turned it in the lock, the front door swung open with an ominous creak.

Steve flicked on the lights and took a step inside.

He had expected this place to look like one of those abandoned houses he had seen in horror movies, considering it had been uninhabited for so long. But there were no vines climbing through the windows, or rats scurrying across the floor. Aside from a little dust, the place looked exactly as it had when he was eighteen.

It was so weird, being back here. It felt like he was trespassing on someone else's property. Even though the house was lawfully his now, signed over to him and everything, Steve couldn't shake the sensation of not belonging there.

He trudged up the stairs and opened the door to his childhood bedroom. The room was just as he left it, but its immaculate state - from the made bed to the vacuumed carpet - gave the impression that no one had ever lived there before.

Steve flopped down on the bed, exhausted from a full day's worth of driving, and stared up at the ceiling. He only allowed himself to lie there for a few minutes before he forced himself to get up and unload the rest of his things from the car.

After that was done, Steve aimlessly wandered around what was now his kitchen, and made a vague mental note to go grocery shopping sometime soon. He checked the clock, and it was nowhere near an acceptable time to go to bed.

It only took Steve about an hour of lounging around pathetically before he picked up the phone to call Nancy.

Despite the ugly ending of their relationship in senior year, over time, he and Nancy had actually managed to become amiable again. They

had kept in touch all throughout Steve's four years in college, with a few phone calls here and there. You could even say that, nowadays, they maintained an easy friendship.

It just so happened that Nancy also wasn't doing anything on that particular night, so she agreed to plans to catch up in person. They settled on meeting up at a local 50's themed diner.

Nancy grinned when she spotted him sitting in a booth, and wrapped him in a quick, friendly hug, remarking about how *different* he looked and how it was so good that he was finally back, after so long.

Steve didn't share the sentiment. The moment he saw the roadside sign that declared he had once again entered Hawkins, Indiana, a raw, empty feeling settled in his stomach. A feeling that only intensified as he moved back in to the home that he had promised himself to never set foot in again.

It felt like giving up.

Even so, he couldn't help smiling as they fell into a comfortable conversation over burgers and fries. Nancy was exactly as she always had been.

She gushed about her classes at Notre Dame, and about all the bright, innovative people she was meeting. Set to graduate with a double major, she was almost sad that she only had a year left of school to go.

Steve, on the other hand, was stuck with a degree in Business and had no idea what he could do with it. He didn't have any plans, really, unless moping around in your parents' house counted as plans.

Nancy, thankfully, changed the subject to: "Oh, did you hear that Jonathan is also back for the summer from NYU? We're actually meeting up for coffee tomorrow. You should join us!"

Steve remembered Jonathan from high school, but hadn't seen him or spoken to him since he went off to college. The only impression he had of him was as a guy who got with his ex-girlfriend while they were still kinda (but not really) dating.

While Steve wasn't one to be bitter about things that happened literally years ago, he was still iffy about sitting down to some kind of coffee date with him. Especially since he was invited entirely as an afterthought.

But then he remembered that the only thing he had to do tomorrow was sit around on the couch or dust off the bannisters, and decided, well, what the hell. What's the worst that could happen?

At the very least he wouldn't be a complete third wheel. He had heard from Nancy during one of their phone calls that she and Jonathan had actually broken up a few months after they started dating (for reasons that she didn't specify).

So Steve was like, "That sounds great, what time?" and Nancy, delighted, gave him all the details about when and where.

And that's how Steve ended up at one of the local coffee shops at 11:00 AM the next morning, to find a young man standing around outside with his hands stuffed in his pockets.

Steve squinted as he approached, and found himself thinking, *Wait, is that him?*

The guy squinted back, and then gave him an awkward little wave before he hesitantly said, "Steve?"

Steve blinked at him. "Oh, hey, Jonathan," he replied. The first name tasted weird on his tongue.

The years had really done a lot for Byers.

Steve could tell just from first glance that his shoulders were broader, and that he had put on a bit of muscle - the kind that came with maturity. His face had more sharp angles to it than it did when he was a teen. Also, while he was still shorter than Steve, he might've gained a few inches of height.

Steve politely stuck out a hand. "Nice to see you again. How've you been?" Jonathan shook, and Steve noticed how warm his hands were as his fingers curled around his own.

“I’m fine. Busy,” he mumbled, his gaze landing somewhere behind Steve’s shoulder. After a moment, Steve remembered to let go of his hand.

“I hear you’re at NYU. What’s it like over there?” Steve asked.

As they waited outside for Nancy, they chatted aimlessly. It wasn’t as hard to talk to Jonathan as Steve expected it was going to be. Still, they kept their conversation skin-deep, and didn’t stray from tried and true topics like the weather or gas prices.

After about ten minutes had passed, and there was still no sign of their mutual friend, Jonathan speculated that she was probably just running late and suggested that they go inside and order. Steve agreed, and soon they were sitting together at a table by the window.

“So, Jonathan,” Steve began from behind a warm mocha (he loved sweet stuff), “What’s your major?”

Jonathan took a sip of his hot tea. “I switched about a hundred times, but right now, I’m actually in Biology for pre-med. What about you?”

“Me? I just graduated with a degree in Business,” Steve replied.

Jonathan hummed. “Do you like it?” he asked.

“Like what?”

“Business,” Jonathan clarified.

Steve hesitated, swirling his coffee in his styrofoam cup. “Haha, no, not really,” he admitted after a bit.

“Then why do it?”

Steve blinked. “Oh, well, it’s what my parents wanted. You know how it is.”

Jonathan shook his head. “But *you’re* the one doing it.”

“Yeah, but they’re the ones who paid for it,” Steve countered. Jonathan shrugged.

“I guess. But it’s your life,” Jonathan reasoned, and Steve couldn’t help but nod at that.

Time flew by as he sat there in that coffee shop, talking to Jonathan. They got to know each other pretty well.

Jonathan was still taking pictures like he did in high school, and sending them off to enter in contests when he had the chance. For a quiet guy, he could go on and on about photography, and surprisingly, it didn’t bother Steve one bit.

Steve, in turn, told him all about the shenanigans he got into in college, including the time when he woke up after a night of partying in a stranger’s bathtub with his socks on his hands and no pants.

Jonathan laughed so hard he snorted, and cute little dimples showed up on his cheeks.

After a while, one of the baristas came up to their table and said, “Hello, I’m sorry, but my manager said that you guys need to order something else if you want to stay here. We need the table.”

Steve raised his eyebrows and glanced at his watch. It was well past two. Wow, had they really been talking for over three hours?

Steve looked over to Jonathan and then back at the barista. “It’s fine, I should probably get going anyway.”

They got up and walked outside into the bright summer day. Steve felt lighter somehow. He couldn’t remember the last time he had meshed so well with another person.

They stood outside for a brief interlude, and Steve had to bite back his disappointment to say, “Bye, Jonathan. I guess I’ll see you around?”

Jonathan nodded in agreement and said, “Yeah. Bye, Steve.”

Steve waved a little before he turned around to head back to his car. But a small “Wait.” stopped him.

“Yeah?” Steve said, turning on his heel to face Jonathan. A ray of

sunlight made him squint.

“Do you want to go out to dinner with me sometime?”

Steve snorted. “What, like a date?” he joked, his mouth quirking up at the corner.

“Yeah, like a date,” answered Jonathan, without a hint of jest. He was standing straight, his hands once again stuffed in his pockets, but his gaze directed squarely on Steve’s face.

Steve blinked. Oh.

Despite the number of dates he had been on, Steve had never been asked out by a guy before. He wasn’t entirely sure what to expect, and honestly, it made him kind of nervous.

But he was open to the idea. Had been for quite a while.

Besides, he couldn't deny that he was attracted to Jonathan, and that he enjoyed hanging out with him. It really didn’t seem like that bad of an idea to say yes.

So Steve replied, “Sure. When?”

He could see the relief wash over Jonathan’s face at his answer. They exchanged numbers and made plans to see each other at seven on Friday.

For some reason, Steve couldn’t stop grinning, even after he drove back to his house and got around to cleaning up the place.

About an hour after he got home, Nancy called, and apologized for not making it, explaining that something urgent came up and that she tried to call to let them know but that they had both already left the house.

Steve assured her it was fine.

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1994
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“Hey. Careful,” Jonathan warned as he held up the bottom end to a large, heavy box they were carrying up the stairs.

Steve, opposite to him and walking backwards, responded, “Yeah, yeah, don’t worry, I got it,” before his heel caught on one of the steps and he stumbled a little, keeping his hold on his end through sheer dumb luck. He sheepishly grinned at Jonathan’s glare.

After a few more minutes of slow, *careful* steps, they managed to make it up the rest of the stairs in one piece and set down the box on the soft, carpeted floor.

They had just bought one of those assemble-it-yourself cribs from the local furniture store, and now, it was sitting in their nursery, waiting to be put together.

Steve popped his spine and shook out his arms before he said, “Well, this sucker ain’t gonna assemble itself.” He kneeled down in front of the box and opened it with a pair of scissors.

He started by taking out the various components of the crib and laying them out on the floor for better access. Meanwhile, Jonathan stretched his arms over his head and said, “I’m gonna make us some sandwiches. I guess keep doing what you’re doing, and I’ll be back in a few?”

Steve grinned and said, “Thanks, babe,” to Jonathan, who shot him back a thumbs-up and then left the room.

A few minutes later, as promised, Jonathan returned with a single plate and two sandwiches. He had cut off the crust for Steve. By then, his husband had finished removing all the contents of the box.

Jonathan took one look at the dozens of pieces, from screws, to panels, to bars, and grimaced. Steve, sharing the same sentiment, suggested, “Maybe we should eat these downstairs. You know, so we don’t get crumbs on the carpet.”

Jonathan quickly nodded in agreement.

Soon, they were seated at the kitchen table, chatting and joking with each other as they ate. Eventually, though, they each ran out of

sandwich and the conversation stopped.

They sat there in silence for a moment as they both contemplated the inevitable. Jonathan picked up the plate.

As if following a cue, Jonathan mentioned, “I should wash the dishes,” at the same time Steve said, “I should take out the trash.”

They locked eyes with each other and nodded, both fully aware of the game they were playing.

So Jonathan got to soaping up and rinsing down the plates in the sink while Steve took the only three-quarters full trash bag outside. Once he came back in, he helped Jonathan dry and put away the rest of the dishes.

Their kitchen was spotless, they were both fed, and their trash can was empty. There was really only one thing left to do.

Jonathan sighed, and said, “We should really get back to the crib,” while Steve, resigned, agreed with a solemn nod.

They padded back upstairs and into the nursery, where the crib was still lying in pieces, just as unassembled as ever.

Steve wiggled his fingers and said, “Well, let’s get to it,” before he picked up two parts he thought might fit together.

Jonathan suggested, “Let’s find the directions first.”

They both started digging through the pieces, trying their best to keep everything at least partially organized.

After a while, though, with still no directions to be found, Jonathan sat back on his heels and frowned. “Damn, did this thing just not come with instructions or something?”

Steve shrugged, also puzzled, as he sifted through some wooden bars.

“It might look like a little booklet,” Jonathan mused, gathering the screws into a pile.

“...A booklet?”

Jonathan’s head snapped up, and he said, out loud, “Oh no.”

“I found a booklet when I was opening the box. But it was just the manual, so I threw it away.”

Jonathan’s eyes widened.

“You always throw away the manual,” Steve explained, still blissfully unaware of his fatal mistake.

“Steve, honey, that was the *instruction manual,* ” Jonathan stressed. Steve blinked.

“Oh. Oh, *shit.* I’m such an idiot,” Steve said as he got up and dusted himself off. “It’s okay, I’ll just get it from the - “ He smacked a palm to his forehead. “Shit. I just took out the trash.”

Jonathan took a look around at the billion parts scattered around them and bit his lip, knowing instantly that they were screwed.

Choosing to remain positive, he assured, “It’s fine. How hard can it be, really?”

Very.

About an hour passed, and the outlook was looking bleak. The crib was no closer to being together than when they first started, but they both were still diligently working.

Steve was trying to slot a piece that was labelled “2” with a piece that was labelled “3” (helplessly unaware that “2” was actually supposed to slot with “1”) when he decided to ask a question that had be heavily weighing on his mind for days.

“Hey, Jonathan?” he began.

Jonathan was concentrating on screwing in a bar with one of the shitty mini-tools that came with the box. “Yeah?” he answered.

“What should our kid call us?”

Jonathan blinked and looked up. “What do you mean?” he asked.

“Like, dad names,” Steve clarified. He shifted a bit, and sat up. The two pieces he was trying to adjust slid out of alignment.

Jonathan set down the tool, pausing his work. “Why not just ‘Dad’?”

“Because we can’t *both* be ‘Dad’,” Steve replied. “That would get confusing.”

Jonathan had to agree. For a moment, he hummed in consideration, before deciding, “Then I guess you can be ‘Dad’, and I’ll be ‘Jonathan’.”

Steve shook his head immediately at that. “But they’re gonna be your *kid.* You gotta have a *dad* name.” It was a hill he was willing to die on, evidently.

Jonathan thought about it for a bit, and nodded. He scooted closer to Steve. “You’re right.”

He rested his head on Steve’s shoulder and breathed out a long sigh. “Father?”

Steve shrugged. “I don’t know. It kinda sounds too formal,” he reasoned. “What about ‘Papa’?”

Jonathan shook his head vehemently. There was no way *Papa* would ever be on the table.

They both mulled it over for a moment, before Steve spoke up. “I guess we’ll figure it out along the way?”

Jonathan leaned down to plant a kiss on his husband’s cheek. “That sounds about right.”

They’d be figuring out a lot along the way. How to be *Dad* s, for one thing. God knows they both didn’t have good examples for fathers. Just like with the crib, they’d stumble through parenthood haphazardly, but do their absolute best to make sure things turned out alright.

But one thing was an absolute certainty - there would be no shortage of love in this house.

Just for fun, Jonathan decided to say, “Actually, no. How about I’m ‘Dad’ and you’re ‘Bon Jovi’?”

Steve laughed, his eyes crinkling at the corners, and picked up one of the panels. “Alright, Dorothea, let’s get back at it.”

After another hour of backbreaking work that got them nowhere, they finally gave up and called Nancy. She had it done in ten minutes.

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1991

It was a bright spring afternoon. The sky was the most vibrant blue Steve had ever seen it, and white, puffy clouds flew overhead.

A light breeze kissed Steve’s cheeks and rustled his hair. The air smelled fresh and crisp.

He was standing in the Byers’ backyard, dressed in the best suit he could rent, his hair styled exactly as he wanted it.

In front of Steve sat a crowd of people he cared deeply about, and who cared about him.

It could not be a more perfect day to marry Jonathan Byers.

He wasn’t nervous, but he was extremely excited. It felt like his heart was going to leap out of his chest, and his pulse was drumming at the speed of light.

The music started, and a hush fell over the crowd. Steve held his breath.

The back door to the Byers’ house opened, and out stepped the love of Steve’s life, his arm linked with his mother’s.

They had decided to do it this way because, unlike Steve, Jonathan
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had someone to give him away.

Jonathan was breathtaking. He had on a freshly pressed black tux, and shiny shoes. His hair was slicked back for the first time ever (and probably the last time ever). He was smiling like he couldn't help it, one of those smiles that showed all his teeth and brightened up his whole face. His brown eyes reflected the sunlight and sparkled.

Steve had never seen anyone more beautiful in his life.

Jonathan and his mom took slow steps forward in time to the music. Joyce looked just as happy to be giving Jonathan away as Jonathan looked to be getting married.

Steve could only focus on Jonathan. It hit him all at once - he was getting *married* to *Jonathan* and they were going to be *husbands* and *Jonathan* was actually *marrying* him and they were going to be *married* - and he felt his throat constrict.

He felt the pressure build up behind his eyes until he couldn't hold it back anymore, and then he was crying big, fat tears that streamed down his cheeks and dripped down his neck. He couldn't help it; he was just so, so happy.

He stepped off the altar (that wasn't really an altar) and made his way toward Jonathan with long strides. He met him halfway, his face probably already a mess of snot and saline, his nose probably a vibrant red.

Jonathan's grin was even bigger now, if that were possible, and he reached out to dry Steve's cheeks with his thumbs.

And Steve just leaned down and kissed him - long, and slow, and perfect. And maybe it was bad luck, kissing Jonathan before the ceremony like that, but neither of them seemed to mind.

Steve pulled back and looked into Jonathan's eyes, all sappy and romantically because he had a *right* to be, and felt his heart skip a beat.

Joyce cleared her throat from beside him, and the three of them shared a breathless laugh. She unlinked her arm from Jonathan's and

gave his hand over to Steve, who immediately took the opportunity to lace their fingers together. They walked the rest of the way together.

At the faux altar, there wasn't a priest, but there was Hopper. By this point, he had been married to Joyce for years, and was honored to officiate her son's wedding. He took his job seriously, and started off strong. "Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today…"

Steve felt like he was in a dream. They each said their own vows, but also chose to go through the "I Do" bit, just for fun. When Jonathan said the words, it took everything Steve had to stop himself from crying again.

At the close, Hopper ended things with, "I now pronounce you husband and husband," and a chorus of cheers erupted from the crowd.

They finished up with another kiss, and Steve reached up to cup Jonathan's face with both hands. He felt like he was on fire, like every part of him was radiating light, and he knew that if he were given the choice, he'd happily stay kissing Jonathan for the rest of eternity.

Afterwards, there was a big party, complete with dancing, and drinks, and white cake that they mashed into each other's faces. There was music and relatives that Steve hadn't seen in years and small children that ran around and ducked underfoot.

It was everything that he had ever wanted.

Steve stayed as close to Jonathan as possible, like they were attached at the hip, and just couldn't wrap his mind around the fact that they were *husbands* now.

After the sun dipped low in the sky, and the festivities started to die down, a fancy car, complete with a chauffeur, came to whisk them away to an even fancier hotel where they'd be spending their wedding night.

They each climbed in the backseat as their family waved them off,

and Steve wasted no time in grabbing Jonathan's hand once they were buckled in. He slid as close as he could to him, and whispered in his ear.

"What's it feel like to be illegally married to me, Jonathan Byers?" Steve asked.

Jonathan laughed, like music to Steve's ears, and whispered back, "Like you'd expect it to feel, Steve Byers."

Steve grinned and nipped at the shell of Jonathan's ear.

It was easy to make the decision to change his name. The Byers were the only real family he had ever had. He didn't feel any more attached to the surname "Harrington" than he did to an old pair of shoes.

"Like a vicious criminal, duping the feds?" Steve suggested, running his hand up Jonathan's thigh.

Jonathan smiled against Steve's neck, and then kissed a trail back up to his ear. "Something like that," he replied softly.

Steve turned his head to find Jonathan's mouth in the dark, and deepened the kiss in an instant. Jonathan responded with just as much enthusiasm, and soon, they were frantically making out in the back of that car like they were teenagers.

Steve mussed up Jonathan's hair while Jonathan tugged at his shoulders to pull him impossibly closer.

Way too quickly, Steve pulled back with a nibble to Jonathan's lower lip. They shared a couple of deep, heavy breaths.

"I, for one, can't wait to get you all to myself," Steve purred, his voice low and rough.

Jonathan couldn't agree more.

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1994
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There was baby blue paint all over the walls, all over the floor, and all over Steve.

His hands were covered in it, his apron was splattered in it, and there were smears of it on his face. Somehow, there were even streaks of blue sticking to the strands of his hair.

Steve held a paint roller and tried his best to apply an even coating of azure to a naked patch of the wall. He was borderline successful in his attempt.

Meanwhile, Jonathan was kneeled on the floor, painstakingly adding details to the trim of an already completely blue wall.

A ceiling-to-floor window let natural light stream in, and Steve could see from where he was standing that a group of the neighborhood kids were playing soccer in the street.

The room was empty, for the moment, and the floor was lined with construction paper. But Steve could just imagine what it would be like when it was finished.

There'd be a crib against the wall. A rocking chair in the corner, illuminated by a reading lamp. Books lined on the shelves, with the buttons that made noise when you pressed them. Toys piled in a box, from stuffed animals to trains to blocks.

They had bought this house together shortly after getting married. It was close to their family, nearby good schools and good hospitals, and paid for by the sale of Steve's childhood home.

A home that had never felt like a home at all. One that he missed occasionally when he was feeling sentimental, but didn't regret giving up even for a moment.

Steve transferred another handprint of blue onto his cheek by accident when he turned around to watch his husband rise to his feet. He dropped the roller into the pan (which caused it to splatter minorly) before walking over to investigate his handiwork.

Baby ducks lined the wall, in a neat little row inches above the floor, with soft yellow feathers and orange beaks.

“That’s the cutest shit I’ve ever seen in my life,” Steve breathed. He reached around his husband’s waist to wrap him in a hug from behind, smearing blue onto his previously pristine paint smock.

“Yep. And it’s gonna stay there, even when our kid is *well* into their teens,” Jonathan replied, his amusement obvious in his voice. He didn’t seem to mind the paint, not when Steve was the one covered in it.

“I wouldn’t want it any other way.”

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1995

Jonathan felt like he hadn’t been asleep for more than a minute before he roused to a bleary half-consciousness in the middle of the night. His mouth was desert-dry, and even with his eyes closed, he could tell that the entire left side of his face was covered in drool.

Fingers blindly stretching out, he tried to pull his warm husband closer and maybe gain a few more moments of precious rest. Instead, he found the other side of the bed to be cold and empty. An odd sense of unease sprouted within him, and his eyes snapped open.

He flopped over onto one side and groggily pushed himself up, rising to a sitting position like a zombie from the grave. He squinted unadjusted eyes at the red digital display of his alarm clock and found it to be very, very late.

He listened. It was quiet. Way too quiet. Not even the baby monitor made a sound. The feeling of unease bloomed in his chest.

After scrubbing his face with both hands, he swung socked feet over the side of the bed to rest on the carpeted floor. He stood, wobbling as he rose to his feet.

Operating on complete autopilot, he shuffled to the nursery and managed to get there without tripping or slamming a hip on a table. After all, he had made this route so many times by now that he could literally do it with his eyes closed.
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The door squeaked quietly as he pushed it open, and he made sure his steps were completely silent as he walked inside.

Steve was seated in their rocking chair, their baby in his arms, and moving them both back and forth slowly with a foot against the floor. His eyes were shut, and his mouth was slack, as if were teetering on the edge between asleep and awake.

Jonathan walked quietly over to stop the motion of the rocking chair with his hand, and Steve's brow furrowed. It was only when he leaned down to scoop up their sleeping child in his arms did Steve's bloodshot eyes snap open.

Steve blinked in confusion for a moment before recognition dawned on him and his expression smoothed out. Jonathan didn't bother trying to conceal his smile as he rose to standing, cradling their baby in a perfect hold, head and back completely supported.

He put her down with the utmost gentleness, and she didn't shift, fuss, or squall - mercifully. Those were activities their baby tended to partake in a lot, as all babies do. But tonight, she slept soundly, warm in her adorable footie pajamas, her small hands curled into tiny, perfect fists.

Hanging on a corner of the rocker was a perfectly crocheted hat (courtesy of Steve). On the back was a blanket (courtesy of Jonathan), some of its stitches out of place and its ends frayed, but loved all the same.

Steve rose to his feet and stumbled only a little as he made his way over to his husband, before he wrapped his arms around his waist and leaned heavily on him, his bleary eyes sliding shut once again.

Jonathan breathed a contented sigh, holding Steve just as tightly, sapping his warmth and nuzzling his face into his neck.

There was no place he'd rather be than here.

Author's Note:

> if anyone else wants to write a steve and jonathan parenthood au PLEASE do because i can assure u that

i will eat that shit up

also please tell me if i got some baby care stuff wrong because i did zero research for this

(btw all the little segments had cheesy puns for titles in the original version, which are, in order, Thread Carefully, A Tall Drink of Hot Tea, Manual Labor, Well Groomed, Just the Blue of Us, and Silent Early Morning.)

message me for prompts